# MAXIMIZING ARMY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN CIVILIAN DEVELOPMENT

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**MAXIMIZING ARMY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN CIVILIAN DEVELOPMENT**

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# ABSTRACT

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Asymmetric threats to U.S. national security, a rapidly shifting world order, globalization and spiraling costs of the Global War on Terrorism shape the 21st Century environment in which Army leaders function.  This volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environment requires dynamic, flexible and agile leaders.  Army leadership transformation focuses on civilian development as an increasingly important part of the Total Force. To that end, the Army invests millions of dollars annually to send senior civilians to Senior Service Schools and to move them into new assignments after graduation. Army return on this investment could be enhanced by establishing a more strategically-oriented and deliberate post-graduate placement process and by improving administrative support during the academic year to the civilian pool of future senior executive service leaders. Recommendations present a way-ahead to enhance civilian leader development and placement, supporting the Department of Defense Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan.

# MAXIMIZING ARMY'S RETURN ON INVESTMENT IN CIVILIAN DEVELOPMENT

> To effectively respond to the global landscape of the 21st Century, DoD must be a world-class employer. We must recruit, manage, develop, and retain the best and brightest in order to achieve the national defense mission. This Plan is the framework we will use to transform the civilian workforce, optimize our capabilities, and prepare for new challenges in a rapidly changing world.[1]

> Department of Defense
> Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010

The Department of Defense Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010 focuses on integrating the civilian workforce seamlessly with the Total Force and preparing them to meet the needs of the combatant commanders. The plan "provides a map for future action for Department of Defense (DoD) components to ensure the 'right people, doing the right jobs, at the right time and place, and at the best value to achieve mission success.'"[2] The Department of the Army's (DA) investment in sending select senior civilians to Senior Service Colleges (SSCs)[3] and to move them into new assignments after graduation aligns directly with DoD's strategic plan. The academic, leadership, and personal development opportunities during the SSC academic year provide valuable education and experience which develop Army career civilians' leadership competencies, preparing them to meet 21st Century challenges. However, some administrative processes may impede optimizing the Army's return on investment. This paper describes the issues and provides recommendations to enhance the strategic placement of SSC-trained civilians, and to improve administrative support to the Army's future civilian senior leaders. The strategic nature of these issues lies in their link to the DoD Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan.

<u>Background</u>

As part of Army's leadership transformation process, in late 2006 the Army unveiled a new Civilian Education System (CES). CES is a "progressive and sequential leader development program that provides enhanced leader development and education opportunities for Army civilians throughout their careers."[4] Designed to develop Army civilians into flexible 21st Century leaders—also known as Pentathletes—CES provides four progressive levels of civilian leadership training. CES develops civilians' leadership competencies in all aspects of the Army mission, "from war-fighting support to statesmanship, to business management."[5] For a select few, SSC attendance occurs after completing the four CES levels and represents the pinnacle of Army institutional leadership development opportunities.

Selection for SSCs is conducted using a highly competitive DA central selection process. Applicants are endorsed and rank-ordered by their Command or Agency before receiving consideration at the DA level. For Academic Year 2008 DA selected 45 Department of the Army Civilians (DACs) to attend SSCs in residence: 20 selected to fill DA training quotas and 25 using allocations from the Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP).[6] Selectees for Academic Year 2009 in residence total 54: 20 from Army quotas and 34 from DLAMP.[7] The Army investment in student salaries to support this developmental opportunity is estimated at more than $ 4.1 M for AY 2008 and $4.9 M for AY 2009.[8]

Salary costs represent only part of the Army investment. Students residing in the SSC local commuting area may be eligible for mileage or common carrier transportation costs reimbursement.[9] In aggregate this cost does not represent a substantial Army investment. However, for civilians whose permanent duty station is not in the local

commuting area, temporary duty (TDY) costs measurably increase the cost per student.

Because TDY authorizations vary significantly based on individual situations, this paper

does not provide summary estimates of travel and per diem costs. However, for

illustrational purposes comparative examples of per diem estimates are furnished in the

endnotes. TDY costs must be considered in any serious assessment of the Army's

return on investment in this prestigious civilian developmental opportunity.[10]

Distractions

 The Army's annual investment in SSC attendance provides a rich opportunity for

career civilians to study strategic issues and learn the Joint and Interagency

environment. Students interface with military peers from all services, International

Fellows from many countries, and DoD and Department of State civilians. SSCs also

provide outstanding opportunities for civilians to learn to think strategically and to learn

and practice the attributes of effective senior leaders. Developing civilians to think and

lead strategically are primary benefits accruing from civilian SSC training. However, the

value of this rich academic environment may be sub-optimized if students expend

significant time and energy resolving non-academic issues. Unfortunately, DACs face

several administrative distractions during the academic year, such as the following two

examples.[11]

Post-graduate Placement

 DACs have attended SSCs for decades. Some graduates moved to new

positions after graduation and tested their newly acquired knowledge and skills in new

environments. Others returned to prior positions and duties. The Army had no

centralized or deliberate placement process for graduates. In June 2003 GEN John M.

Keane, Vice Chief of Staff of the Army (VCSA) directed mandatory placement of

graduates to

> maximize the Army's return on investment and provide an avenue for full utilization of the competencies acquired through SSC education through an assignment process paralleling that which exists for military graduates. Directed placement will advance the goals of professionalizing leader development for the civilian workforce and provide an avenue for full utilization of leadership skills and competencies acquired. Centralized placement will strengthen the Army, ensuring SSC graduates are put to use immediately and on a continuing basis, using the benefits acquired from their development by placement in Army key leadership positions.[12]

Supporting the VCSA's directive, DA created the SSC Graduate Placement

Program (SSC GPP) in June 2003. The program places graduates through several

methods. Some placements result from the GPP program manager's efforts to network

student resumes to human resource directors in the Army commands, to the DA

Functional Chief Representatives (FCR) and to Career Functional Proponents (CFP).[13]

Leaders receiving these resumes may consider students for potential placements into

positions "validated as requiring/desiring SSC."[14] In the second placement method, the

SSC GPP encourages all students to apply competitively for promotions. Therefore,

some placements result when SSC students apply directly and are selected for specific

job vacancies.[15] Some Army Commands use a third and more deliberate placement

method. They consider their SSC graduates as strategic assets and consciously place

them against key positions within the Command or agency. By using this more

deliberate method, these organizations achieve a more direct and measurable return on

their investment in civilians' SSC academic and professional development. The

Installation Management Command is a pioneer and leader in deliberate placement and

successfully places their strategic civilian assets into critical vacancies.

At the USAWC, students have one additional resource to facilitate post-graduate placement efforts. The Department of the Army Assistant G1 for Civilian Personnel provides a highly experienced Human Resources (HR) Specialist who serves as advisor to the USAWC Commandant on civilian matters. The HR specialist has personally taken the initiative to serve as an advisor and liaison for students on placement and other administrative and academic matters. The HR specialist also serves as a hub to collect and actively circulate job vacancy announcements to civilian students. During the current academic year this individual held two valuable conferences to provide opportunities for students to network with senior professionals from the Pentagon and several Army Commands. These efforts serve as a valuable adjunct to, but do not replace, the formal DA SSC GPP process.

There are two checks and balances in the GPP placement methods. One is that "positions into which [civilian students] will be placed must be validated as requiring/desiring SSC."[16] The second is that students who find positions on their own must coordinate with and obtain the approval of the FCRs and CFPs.[17] With these checks and balances, SSC GPP execution may partially meet the VCSA intent by facilitating post-graduate placement. However, the overall placement process is not deliberate nor does it resemble a "process paralleling that which exists for military graduates."[18]

The Army Civilian Education System Policy assigns responsibility to the Office of the Assistant, G1 for Civilian Personnel to "Coordinate operational (post-training) assignments."[19] The policy states that "Like the Officer Corps, civilians graduating from SSC are centrally placed in a position of greater responsibility in another assignment or

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organization where they can apply the advanced education they received."[20] Those two

sentences appear contradictory. "Centrally placed" sounds like an active intentional

placement. However, the GPP program office has no apparent authority to direct

commands to place graduates against "SSC required" positions. Its current operation

functions like a clearing house for resumes and a database to record FCR/CFP

approvals and student assignments, functions consistent with coordinating authority.

With the exception of the third placement method—where Commands deliberately place

their civilian strategic assets into key positions—all of the other placement methods

leave placement partially to chance.[21]

The placement process can be a distraction for civilian students during the

academic year. Even students who work for Commands using the deliberate process

may not receive their follow-on assignments until well into the academic year. Since

students have no absolute guarantee that an appropriate placement will be available,

many divert time from academic activities to prepare multiple resumes in different

formats to accommodate the various placement methods and application processes.[22]

They conduct job searches daily or weekly and prepare multiple applications. Although

this may not sound like a significant effort, the process can be very time-consuming and

may produce few viable leads after a major time investment.[23] In addition, when SSC

students apply for positions their applications do not receive any directed special

treatment or priority consideration. One current student stated "It's a huge distraction

from my studies for me to spend time looking for my own job. Because there is no

priority consideration for USAWC students, I compete with everyone else in the Army on

an equal playing field. I think the GPP should use a systematic process like the DoD

priority placement program so that War College graduates are placed in a timely manner. "[24]

Civilian students who find positions through individual efforts must coordinate with the FCR or CFP for approval.[25] This check validates that the position is acceptable for an SSC graduate.

Compare this with the process for military graduates, whose assignments officer matches the military student's skills, experience and training—detailed in a standardized Officer Record Brief—against an inventory of validated Army placement needs, and then works with the officer and the gaining command or activity to effect optimal placement. The military student may have to interview and be accepted for the position, but the overall process is more of a "push" from Army rather than a time-intensive "pull." Further, using a centralized process to match the officer graduates' skills against an inventory of Army needs is a more reliable way to ensure the Army places the officer to fill strategic needs, providing a return on investment in the officer's professional development. This method is a more viable way to ensure that officers receive assignments based on their potential, and commensurate with their abilities.

Unique Challenges for Overseas Students –

SSC students from overseas duty locations are subject to several administrative and financial challenges which their CONUS counterparts do not face.

The Joint Travel Regulations (JTR) Volume 2 provide two types of long-term training travel authorizations for students whose permanent duty location is not in the local training area. Under the provisions of JTR Chapter 4 students may be authorized a round-trip to and from the training site and 55% per diem during the academic year. As

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an alternative, students may be authorized dependent and household goods transportation to the training location.[26] In practice, the PCS method is generally not offered to overseas students because the cost to ship household goods exceeds the 55% per diem method of travel. Notwithstanding the travel method authorized, overseas students may not ship a privately-owned vehicle (POV), and shipment of unaccompanied baggage is limited to 350 pounds.

Civilian students at the USAWC are not provided housing on post and are not authorized to shop in the Post Exchange or Commissary. The City of Carlisle, PA does not have a public bus system. Therefore, even students who find lodging within walking distance of the school are disadvantaged by not having a POV to shop for groceries and other essential items, to travel to medical appointments, to deliver and pick-up laundry and dry-cleaning, and other tasks.  Relying on the generosity of fellow students to provide transportation is possible. However, coordinating transportation for a ten-month academic year can be a major inconvenience. The JTR does not authorize rental cars for long-term training. Therefore, a student who chooses to rent a vehicle on a short- or long-term basis or to buy a vehicle pays costs out-of-pocket.

The unaccompanied baggage limit may likewise require out-of-pocket expenses for overseas students. The academic year spans four seasons and requires appropriate seasonal clothing. Winter clothing can consume a substantial portion of a student's weight allowance. Given current airline restrictions on baggage weight, students cannot carry a significant amount of clothing with them without incurring excess non-reimbursable baggage charges. Other required essentials during the year generally include professional books, work-related reference materials, computers, personal

papers, linens and basic kitchenware items. The 350-pound unaccompanied baggage limit is typically insufficient to accommodate these needs. Therefore students mail items from their permanent duty station or purchase needed items at their own expense. In addition to the above restrictions, the JTR does not authorize overseas students to ship furniture as part of their unaccompanied baggage. If students do not find furnished accommodations, they may incur additional expenses to purchase basic furniture items and live austerely. One student who could not find a furnished apartment did not want to spend money for furnishings he already owns, but was not authorized to ship. He lives in an unfurnished apartment with only an air mattress, a makeshift desk and a chair. He stated "Being at the Army War College is not supposed to be a punitive event for civilians."[27]

By contrast, CONUS students may drive a POV from their permanent duty station to the SSC and carry as much as they can fit into their vehicles. Those whose permanent duty stations are close to the SSC may return home on weekends to transport needed items as required, without additional out-of-pocket expenses.

Unfortunately, the JTR authorization issues described above are not the only administrative travel issues affecting overseas students. Travel situations may be further complicated by provisions of the Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA) in their overseas duty locations. The privileges accorded to civilians under SOFAs vary from country to country and can affect things such as what housing is available and what lease conditions apply; whether unaccompanied family members may remain in country without their sponsors; vehicle registration privileges; and other similar issues. This list is not a comprehensive inventory of possible issues. Instead, it illustrates that each

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student's situation is unique and requires individual evaluation and resolution. The four overseas students in the USAWC Class of 08 are assigned to organizations in three different countries; however the situations for all four students are different.

Overseas students may also be affected financially by current administrative procedures. The ACTEDS catalog's post-selection guidance for individuals selected for SSCs advises that

> A Notification of Personnel Action, SF50, will be effected reassigning resident SSC selectees to school ("Reassignment NTE (date)," NOAC 943). Another SF50 will be effected to terminate the reassignment ("Termination of Reassignment," NOAC 945). Unless and until the SSC student transfers to another organization via the SSC GPP, they remain on the rolls of their nominating command which is responsible for covering their salary and benefits.[28]

This personnel action may directly impact overseas' students' pay authorizations. Unlike their Continental United States (CONUS) counterparts, DACs serving in overseas locations do not receive the locality pay entitlement provided to CONUS-based employees under the provisions of Title 5 United States Code, Section 5304. Overseas DACs generally receive a local Post Allowance under provisions of Department of State Standard Regulations (DSSR).[29] When DA civilians from overseas attend long-term training, under DSSR provisions they may receive post allowance for up to a 30-day absence from the overseas location. The allowance terminates on the thirty-first day.[30] The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provides official definitions of the "Official worksite for Location-Based Pay Purposes."[31] Under the section "Temporary Changes in Work Location" OPM states "If an employee is temporarily reassigned or promoted to another position in a different geographic area, the temporary work location is considered the official worksite for pay purposes."[32]

Although overseas students are reassigned to the CONUS-based SSC school location, they do not automatically receive locality pay. ACTEDS post-selection administrative procedures specify that SSC students will receive administrative support from their permanent duty locations during the academic year. Overseas organizations do not normally process locality pay actions because the law does not authorize locality pay outside of CONUS. Therefore, students in the current USAWC class worked locality pay issues individually on an <u>ad hoc</u> basis through a representative of the DA G1. This is an administrative seam in the SSC processes and several students have expended considerable time attempting to resolve individual problems. The DA G1 point of contact stated his intent to contact overseas students in the Academic Year 09 class prior to travel order issuance. This will be extremely beneficial to the incoming class.

Several CONUS-based students in the current USAWC class expressed concern that by re-assigning them to Carlisle, PA during the academic year they would lose the higher locality pay at their official duty locations. In October 2007 the DA G1 provided guidance

> that in all cases, employees who attend SSC will do so strictly in a TDY capacity. Under no circumstances will an RPA [Request for Personnel Action] changing the duty station of the student, i.e., Reassignment NTE [not to exceed] or Assignment to Long Term Training, be processed. This will assure that the student will retain all current benefits and locality pay while assigned to the SSC. Stated differently, locality pay will not change for any student, overseas benefits will remain intact despite the 12-14 month assignment in CONUS, and students may not be issued PCS or TCS orders in order to attend SSC.[33]

This author has no doubt that this guidance was intended to be in the best interest of all students. However, because of the SOFA issues mentioned earlier, it does not level the playing field for overseas students. An overseas student without a personnel action assigning him to the training location loses post allowance but has no official

documentation justifying locality pay. Although the G1 representative is working with individuals to attempt to resolve issues, it is on the ad hoc basis mentioned earlier. Some student financial issues have no apparent solutions.

The challenges described above present several examples of disparate treatment between overseas SSC students and their CONUS counterparts. The sad irony is that overseas assignments provide exceptional developmental opportunities for the Army's future Pentathletes, particularly assignments supporting the Combatant Commanders. Position or geographic mobility is a basic tenet of DoD's Strategic Civilian Human Capital Plan and barriers to overseas employment are at odds with Total Force development objectives. Overseas students have already demonstrated a willingness to be mobile and should not be financially or administratively disadvantaged in the SSC experience. At a minimum, the Army should provide accommodations—"in the best interest of the Government"—to tailor solutions for specific situations to "do no harm" to students financially and to "make them whole."

Industry Benchmarks

Benchmarking with industry provides a useful framework to assess how the Army's process of developing its senior civilians compares with corporate sector executive development.[34] I interviewed senior human resource specialists in two U.S.-based global corporations in the banking and chemical industries. [35] [36] Interview questions focused on three areas: first, the types of training or developmental assignments their executives attended; second, the selection and placement processes used to determine which employees to develop through senior executive training or developmental assignments; and third, the administrative support their corporations

used to support executives in training. The results of these interviews are detailed below.

Types of Training/Developmental Assignments

Investing in people as a means to further corporate goals is a common theme in both industries. Corporate training, tuition assistance for advanced degrees and assignments to overseas positions are the three main types of executive developmental opportunities provided in both.

The most important developmental opportunity utilized in both corporations is executive training conducted using internal resources, focused on corporate goals and processes. Both corporations conduct leader/manager development forums over a several-day period in a central location. Senior executives deliver the training and the Chief Executive Officer routinely participates. Besides this "view from the top," using senior leaders to train the next generation of leaders produces several other benefits. The senior leaders provide students[37] with the benefit of their corporate experiences, transferring valuable lessons learned from their successes and failures during their tenure with the company. Of equal importance, a clearly stated objective in both corporations is to furnish students an opportunity to network with the senior corporate executives. Networking is mutually beneficial to students and their corporations. Students develop valuable contacts, enhancing their ability to achieve corporate goals, and giving them visibility with their senior leadership. Networking provides corporate executives an opportunity to get to know the next generation of leaders, helping them to identify "top talent" and facilitating succession planning. As a capstone to this important

developmental opportunity, both corporations provide students with a project, requiring them to develop recommendations to resolve a current business or corporate problem.

Both corporations furnish tuition assistance to student executives for advanced degrees on a case-by-case basis, based specifically on two factors. First, tuition assistance is furnished only to "top talent": those demonstrated high performers identified by management. Second, tuition assistance is available only for coursework that provides benefit to the corporation, normally identified as coursework coincident to the duty position. For example, a high performing employee in a management track would have a high probability of obtaining funding for coursework related to a Masters in Business Administration, but a low probability of receiving funding for coursework leading to a law degree. Employees who receive tuition assistance continue to work full-time during their studies unless they take an unpaid leave of absence. However, few are afforded this type of opportunity due to the fast pace of corporate activities.

Temporary overseas assignments are available to select individuals to provide on-the-job developmental experience. Individuals selected for these assignments undergo cultural training to prepare them to live and work in the assigned country. In one corporation the employee's family also participates in the training. An employee's transfer to an overseas assignment is contingent on successful completion of this training, demonstrating the employee and family's ability to adapt to the new culture.

Selection and Post-Development Placement Processes

Both corporations use a central selection process to determine which executives to send to executive development programs. Their selection processes bear striking similarities. Selections for major developmental opportunities such as corporate training

and overseas assignments are management-driven. Managers nominate and select

only demonstrated high performers, specifically, those they believe have the potential to

excel in positions of greater responsibility. While investment in individual employee

development is important, corporate needs and goals are paramount in selecting and

funding individuals for all developmental opportunities. Managers who nominate

employees must consider the cost to the corporation versus the benefit of the

investment. Training funding often comes out of the line-of-business budget rather than

a central fund. Employees who participate in advanced degree programs are expected

to provide a return on the corporate investment by remaining with the firm for a period of

2-3 years.

The only key difference in the way these corporations select individual executives

for development relates to succession planning.

> Succession Planning is a systematic process of planning for the
> development and placement of people in senior management positions.
> By identifying leadership talent early and cultivating it through training,
> mentoring, and job rotation, the organization can establish, maintain and
> nurture a pipeline of leadership talent – the goal of succession planning.[38]
> [39]

In one corporation the developmental philosophy is that employees "own their own

careers." Although there is corporate succession planning for individual lines of

business, filling future positions is partially dependent on employee initiative rather than

specific succession planning. Employees seek specific training and developmental

opportunities in consultation with management for endorsement. Managers determine

the appropriate developmental opportunities and post-training placement, based on

employees' skills and performance. Employee movement into positions of higher

authority or into another line of business generally occurs based on employee

initiative—applying for or seeking the opportunity and being selected for it—rather than by a top-driven corporate management decision to deliberately place a specific employee. In the other corporation, top talent is identified through intensive succession planning. Corporate executive leadership is actively involved in a deliberate process of identifying and selecting individuals for development based on employees' demonstrated performance, with a focus on future corporate leadership needs. In this latter example, many employees who complete corporate executive training and subsequently demonstrate executive leadership skills are assigned into specific Vice President or General Manager roles.

Administrative Support

Employees in both corporations receive transparent administrative support from their corporations during training and developmental activities. They receive the same pay, benefits and entitlements as they do when they are on the job. When employees travel out of the local commuting area to attend corporate training or developmental activities, they are fully reimbursed for travel expenses with the same reimbursement rates and processes utilized corporation-wide for reimbursement of business travel. Employees participating in advanced degree training generally attend in the local commuting area while working full-time. They are not reimbursed for local travel to the academic institution. Employees assigned to developmental assignments overseas receive relocation travel expenses for themselves and their families as well as local market supplements to ensure their standard of living is not degraded during their overseas assignments.

<u>Comparison of Corporate and Army Development Processes</u>

The most striking similarity between these industry processes for developing future senior leaders and the Army's processes is that both use selection processes designed to identify employees expected to excel in positions of higher authority. Developing "top talent" considers the future benefit to the organization and requires a service obligation from the employees. However, the Army outpaces industry in the depth and breadth of training offered, and by providing fully-paid duty time to pursue extensive education during the SSC experience. On the other hand, industry uses several practices that merit consideration for Army executive development: senior executive involvement, networking and mentoring; giving employees specific corporate issues or problems to work as part of the developmental process; succession planning;[40] and ensuring administrative practices "do no harm" to employees.

<u>Strategic Link</u>

Although the distractions described in this paper may appear to apply to only a small percentage of the Army civilian workforce, the links between these issues and the DoD strategic direction for the civilian workforce are significant.  The DoD Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010 is a paradigm-shifting blueprint to transform the civilian workforce, supporting the Quadrennial Defense Review and the National Defense Strategy. Goal 1 of the DoD plan seeks to

> more effectively manage its pipeline of future leaders through aligned recruitment, selection, education, training and development strategies. DoD typically develops civilian leaders internally, so great importance must be placed on building and managing this pipeline.[41]

Goal 2 calls for a "highly capable workforce characterized by agility, flexibility, diversity, and seamless integration with the Total Force."[42] Effective workforce planning is a key

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element toward achieving this goal, using the following tenets: "optimal results at mission-acceptable levels of timeliness and cost, while ensuring quality human capital availability."[43] With annual budget constraints as a norm in the DoD, these tenets focus limited resources to produce maximum return on investment while simultaneously building a bench of future senior executive service leaders. Specifics in the plan embed corporate human resource best practices including executive leader selection and development, succession planning, and mobility.

Army strategy for 21st Century Leaders is nested within the DoD goals. The Army has a firm commitment to developing civilians,[44] codified in the "Army Civilian Education System Policy, November 2006," [45] and reflected in Army's annual investment in SSC education. However, the issues outlined in this paper provide some evidence that the processes to execute this policy could benefit from fine-tuning to maximize the Army's return on investment (optimal results); remove barriers or disincentives so that Army can continue to attract the best and brightest to the SSC academic experience (highly capable workforce); and develop and strategically place the bench of future senior civilian leaders (ensuring quality human capital availability) to meet the intent of the DoD Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan. The following recommendations are designed to enhance an excellent Army program.

Recommendations

Senior Service College Graduate Placement Program

Army should develop a method to move the GPP mandatory placement process from a relatively passive system to a dynamic, pre-planned and deliberate placement

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process linking SSC selection, acceptance and post-graduate placement into one process. Following are several recommendations to implement a more active system.

- Establish Civilian Records Briefs (CRBs) as an SSC administrative requirement and use CRBs as the standard resume for the SSC GPP process. CRBs could eventually be used throughout the DoD civilian workforce using the DoD Acquisition Record Brief as a template.

- Link the SSC selection process to a validated post-graduate placement assignment. Compel agencies or commands to identify a specific post-graduate assignment or location as part of their SSC endorsement package. The SSC GPP program office could run a concurrent process using the inventory of Army positions "requiring/desiring SSC" to establish other potential placement options. Provide selectees designated post-graduate assignments prior to the start of the academic year. Deliberate placement could be further leveraged by requiring students to conduct Strategic Research Projects (SRPs) focused on topics designated by their gaining commands. Linking selection, projects and placement may provide the Army a more direct way to measure return on investment and would prepare students to "hit the ground running" in their new assignments.

- Establish an SSC assignments officer and use a process similar to the officer placement process. Identify multiple placement options and deliberately match graduate abilities to Army needs.

- Maintain an active inventory of all civilian positions containing a designator "requiring/desiring SSC." Use this list as a filter in the Defense Civilian Personnel Database System to screen for recruiting actions initiated for these positions. As

an alternative, establish a process similar to the DoD Priority Placement Program to effect mandatory placement into SSC-identified positions.

- Emulate an industry model for executive development. Identify and assign formal mentors to work with students during the academic year and during transition to their new duty assignments and to provide them with networking opportunities. Senior Executive Service personnel or former graduates of SSCs could serve as mentors. Former graduates could "pay it backwards," providing the benefit of their experience and developing the next generation of mentors.

- Using a combination of the above recommendations, transition toward a broader Army corporate management process for SSC students, similar to the evolving DoD process for senior executive service members. Begin dialogue with the other Services to identify job placement opportunities to build a pool of potential 21st Century senior executive service leaders within the DoD.

Implementing these recommendations would require policy changes, establishing appropriate authorities to execute mandatory placements, and personnel to perform these functions. Some of the recommendations would also require socializing the concepts among senior Army leaders to effect buy-in. These methods would result in a more deliberate placement process, providing better return on investment for the Army, and maximizing the post-SSC development of 21st century Pentathletes. Implementation may set the conditions to move the current workforce toward the "centrally managed education and career management for senior civilians"[46] currently under concept development by an Army tiger team.[47] Improving the Army's return on

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investment would benefit the Army, would align with DoD's Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan and ultimately would support the National Military Strategy.

Unique Challenges for SSC Students from Overseas Locations –

Overseas students bring valuable experience to the SSC environment and resolving their challenges is eminently possible with pre-planning and flexibility.

- Formally establish a DA program manager to coordinate administrative issues for overseas students. Resolve temporary duty travel entitlements issues and locality pay issues in advance of travel order issuance.

- Authorize PCS for students enroute to or from overseas duty assignments using the SSC GPP mandatory mobility requirement as justification, or using PCS "in the best interest of the Government."

- Assign overseas students to a special account such as the Army Fellows Program and authorize PCS.

- Design flexible travel solutions which do no financial harm. For example, provide authorizations for the following: POV shipment, a higher unaccompanied baggage authorization, or non-temporary storage in the country of assignment or at a Government-owned or leased CONUS storage facility.

Conclusion

The Senior Service School experience is unparalleled in providing civilians depth and breadth of exposure to strategic issues, strategic thinking and the complex strategic environment. The Army's commitment to civilian development is visible, and preparing civilians to be flexible and agile leaders provides strength to the Total Force. The issues described in this paper are not flaws, but instead represent seams in processes.

Recommendations are designed to make a strong program of civilian development even

stronger, to take an active and deliberate approach to placing civilian SSC graduates

where Army needs are greatest, and to enhance the Army's return on investment. The

Army's civilian development process is on azimuth, supporting the DoD Civilian Human

Capital Strategic Plan,

Endnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 2005), unnumbered page*.*

[2] Ibid., 3.

[3] Senior Service Schools include the U.S. Army War College, Naval War College, Air War College, National Defense University and Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

[4] "Civilian Education System/Transforming Leaders through Education," linked from the *Army Management Staff College Home Page*, available from http://www.amsc.belvoir.army.mil/ces; Internet; accessed 9 February 2008.

[5] Ibid.

[6] U.S. Army Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel, Melinda Darby, memorandum "Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) Selection Board Results for Senior Service Colleges, Academic Year (AY) 2007 – 2008," Arlington, VA, 22 March 2007.

[7] U.S. Army Assistant G-1 for Civilian Personnel, Susan Duncan, memorandum "Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA) Selection Board Results for Senior Service Colleges, Academic Year (AY) 2008 – 2009," Arlington, VA, 17 December 2007.

[8] Defense Leadership and Management Program (DLAMP) participants fall under Department of Defense (DoD) funding for temporary duty costs while attending SSC. However, since DLAMP students continue to be administratively supported by their permanent duty stations—in this case, Army organizations—salary investment during SSC attendance remains an Army responsibility. Salary data are estimated using the U.S. Office of Personnel Management Salary Tables for 2008, and the following assumptions: 1) The average salary of students is estimated using a GS-14, Step 5; 2) The locality pay area is "Rest of U.S". This is the lowest locality pay rate (13.18%); 3) The annual average salary is pro-rated to 10.5 months which includes the SSC academic year, registration and orientation time, plus travel time to and from the duty station. The annual computation formula is the total number of students x (average salary/12 x 10.5). Academic Year (AY) 2008: 45 x ($104,018/12x10.5) = $4,095,709. AY 2009: 54 x ($104,018/12x10.5) = $4,914,850. Please note that the salary figures cited in this paragraph do not include students selected for Distance Education Programs (two students per year for AY 08 and AY 09) since these students participate in most of their training from their home stations.

[9] Department of Defense *Civilian Personnel Joint Travel Regulations, Change 483, Chapter 4, Part K, Paragraph C4500 Allowances (*Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, 1 January 2006)*,* C4K-1*.*

[10] The total Army investment in SSC temporary duty (TDY) costs may vary significantly from year to year; therefore this paper provides only a comparison of estimated per diem costs in two locations.  The actual TDY costs depend on many variables including: the number of civilian students coming from outside the local commuting area; whether students outside the local commuting area select the per diem or partial permanent change of station option; mode of travel; which travel authorizations apply, for example: unaccompanied baggage and travel of dependents. Under provisions of the Department of Defense Civilian Personnel Joint Travel Regulations (Chapter 4, Part K: Training Course Attendance, Paragraph C4530, page C4K-1), students in training for more than 180 days who do not have a permanent duty location in the local commuting area are entitled to one of two options in addition to their travel to the training location: 55% per diem or a partial permanent change of station move. Most students elect the per diem option and the per diem cost varies by SSC location.  Using the latest per diem tables (updated 31 December 2007), following is a comparison of civilian long-term training per diem costs for two SSC locations.  Carlisle, PA per diem is $133, or approximately $73 per day at the 55% long-term training per diem reimbursement rate.  By contrast, the District of Columbia per diem rates vary from $218-$265, making the civilian long-term training per diem $120-$146.  Assuming the academic year is 300 days, the Army's per diem investment per student and academic year would be approximately $22 K in Carlisle and $36-44K in the District of Columbia.

[11] Several civilian students at the U.S. Army War College described their administrative concerns to the author in the early months of Academic Year 08.  Their concerns served as the impetus for this paper. Issues and recommendations will have wider applicability to DACs attending other SSCs.

[12] U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff General John M. Keane, "Mandatory Placement for Civilian Graduates of Senior Service Colleges (SSC)," memorandum for Functional Chief Representatives, DA Functional Representatives, Commanders and the Superintendent, U.S. Military Academy, Washington, D.C., 5 June 2003.

[13] "Senior Service College Graduate Placement Program (SSC GPP)," Army Career Training and Development System Catalog, Chapter 2; linked from the *Civilian Personnel Online Home Page*; available from //www.cpol.army.mil/library/train/catalog/ch02gen.html; Internet; accessed 10 February 2008, 4.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Keane.

[19] U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Civilian Education System Policy* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7 Training Directorate, November 2006), 7.

[20] Ibid., 18.

[21] The following anecdotes occurred during separate conversations between the author and three individuals who participate in the SSC GPP placement process. These comments were offered freely in conversation, not as a result of formal interviews. The individuals agreed that the author could include their comments under condition of anonymity. Anecdote 1: One senior manager advised that she was talking to a senior leader about placing a student/imminent graduate into a vacant position. Although the student had the right skill set for the job and was about to graduate from one of the Army's premier academic institutions, the senior leader asked "Why should I hire this person? I would rather hire someone I know who has demonstrated performance." Anecdote 2: Another senior manager advised that when he is trying to facilitate post-graduate placements he often receives questions similar to anecdote 1. He stated that there is a common perception among some leaders that many civilian SSC graduates are professional students, rather than skilled leaders like their officer counterparts are. These perceptions may indicate that some senior leaders do not place the same credibility in the civilian SSC selection criteria/selection processes as they do in the officer criteria/selection processes. In the third anecdote, the individual is a senior technician in an Army service component command. The individual advised that the DA FCR had forwarded requests to their organization to assist with placement of imminent SSC graduates. The technician's office has no direct contacts or authorities with external organizations to assist with the placement efforts. Therefore, the method this individual uses to find potential placements is to use the Army's Civilian Personnel Online system located at https://cpolwapp.belvoir.army.mil/public/vabSelfNom/index.jsp or USA Jobs, the official Federal Government website at http://www.usajobs.gov/. Both of these sources are potential sources the SSC students use if they are seeking a job on their own.

[22] The SSC GPP requires a resume of three pages or less in a specified format, with signature. Most Army positions and many positions filled through USA Jobs use RESUMIX format as a standard. RESUMIX requires online input onto a standard template. RESUMIX can accommodate a longer than a three-page resume and therefore employees can generally provide more detail and/or include a full employment history. Senior Executive Service position vacancies require an extensive application process including detailed Executive Core Qualifications which are tailored to a specific vacancy.

[23] The author conducted weekly searches using the search engines listed in endnote 26 over the past several months. The number of vacancies generated from these searches has varied from 44 to well over 1000, based on a worldwide search for GS-15/YC-03 positions in 5 occupational series. Using the search criterion "worldwide" and 5 occupational series accounts partially for the large number of vacancies generated in these searches. However, the search engines do not differentiate between open continuous vacancy announcements and discrete vacancy announcements. Nor do the search engines generate solely GS-15/YC-03 announcements because NSPS pay bands overlap several GS series. Therefore, many announcements generated as part of the searches were open-continuous (i.e., potentially no actual vacancy) while others reflected vacancies for positions with as low as a GS-12 equivalent. Sorting manually through announcements is not difficult, but it is time-consuming. Once the manual sort process is complete there are generally only a few announcements to

review in detail. However, not all of those announcements are necessarily viable because many contain the statement "Permanent Change of Station (PCS) expenses are not authorized."  For example, on the date of this writing two permanent full-time GS-15 equivalent positions (NSPS pay band YA/YC-03) on the DA staff contained this PCS disclaimer (announcement numbers NEHT08551543 and NEHT08517763).

[24] Mr. Steven G. Crawford, interview by author, 6 March 2008, Carlisle, PA.

[25] "Senior Service College Graduate Placement Program (SSC GPP)," 4.

[26] U.S. Department of Defense, *Joint Travel Regulations, Volume 2* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, March 2008), available from http://dodtravelregs.hqda.pentagon.mil/ propub/DocView/200802jtr//; Internet; accessed 16 February 2008, Chapter 4, Part K: Training Course Attendance, Paragraph C4500, page C4K-1.

[27] Mr. William Fowler, interview by author, 7 March 2008, Carlisle, PA.

[28] "Senior Service College Graduate Placement Program (SSC GPP)," 6.

[29] U.S. Department of State, *Department of State Standardized Regulations (DSSR)*, (Washington, D.C.: July 22, 2007), Paragraph 220, available from http://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=231&menu_id=92; Internet; accessed 19 February and 8 March 2008.

[30] Ibid., paragraphs 225.1 and 225.2.

[31] U.S. Office of Personnel Management, *Official Worksite for Location-Based Pay Purposes,* available from https://www.opm.gov/oca/pay/html/Official_Duty_Station.asp; Internet; accessed 6 and 8 March 2008.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Peter Hosutt, email message to Dr.  Sara L. Morgan, 3 October 2007.

[34] This section provides brief descriptions of human resource practices at two major corporations, specifically focused on executive development training. This is not an extensive benchmarking effort, but rather is an effort to identify potential best practices.

[35] Judy R. Yost, Staffing Executive, Chase Card Services, Division of J.P. Morgan Chase, telephone interview by author, 26 January 2008.

[36] William Spenla, Global Human Resources Manager, DuPont Safety Resources, E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company, telephone interview by author, 27 January 2008.

[37] For the purpose of this section on Types of Training, the word "student" or phrase "student executive" will be used in lieu of "executives in training" or "future leaders" to avoid confusion with the "senior corporate executives" who deliver the training.

[38] "Succession Planning," undated, linked from *American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) & The Center for Association Leadership*, available from http://www.asaecenter.org/wiki/ index.cfm?Page=Succession%20Planning; Internet; accessed 9 February 2008.

[39] The term "succession planning" has various meanings and methods of implementation depending on the public or private sector application: corporate/industry, professional associations, government, and non-profit organizations. Variations in these definitions and methods center primarily on tailoring succession planning to corporate or organizational goals. For the purpose of this paper, the ASAE & the Center for Association Leadership definition captures the spirit of the many extant definitions.

[40] Although existing Government personnel regulations and merit systems processes do not permit true succession planning, current Government workforce planning is very similar. This author will provide a recommendation in the final section of this paper regarding deliberate placement of SSC graduates. The recommendation is intended to represent a Government alternative to succession planning.

[41] *Department of Defense Civilian Human Capital Strategic Plan 2006-2010*, 10.

[42] Ibid, 12.

[43] Ibid.

[44] U.S. Army, *Review of Education, Training and Assignments for Leaders (RETAL)* (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7), 22 November 2006.

[45] *Army Civilian Education System Policy.*

[46] Association of the United States Army, "AUSA Civilian Report, Mobilization for Civilian Employees," *AUSA News*, December 2007, 17.

[47] Ibid.